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ABSTRACT

This paper provides a rhetorical analysis of a protest action, namely, the mobilization and action of black citizens in Seattle, Washington, in reaction to the 1965 shooting of a black man (Robert L. Reese) by a local police officer. A description of actions during this time, as reported by two Seattle newspapers, is provided. An extrinsic examination of the situation probes the rhetorical problem of police brutality and explains the formation of the Freedom Patrols, nonviolent groups of concerned black-community members who were devoted to justice. Finally, an intrinsic examination is provided of the Freedom Patrols' organization and actions, their effect on the news media, and the ultimate public identification of the discrepancy between the police department's own description of its behavior and attitude toward blacks and that department's actual behavior and attitude. (KS)

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ACTION AND RHETORIC IN SEATTLE'S FREEDOM PATROLS: A STUDY OF PROTEST ACTIVITY BY A LOCAL SOCIAL MOVEMENT

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ACTION AND RHETORIC IN SEATTLE'S FREEDOM PATROLS: A STUDY OF PROTEST ACTIVITY BY A LOCAL SOCIAL MOVEMENT

Much of the civil rights protest of the 1960's was played on a national stage, with all of the nation's citizenry as the audience. Birmingham, Selma, and the march on Washington were settings for episodes which captured the imagination of the people and the coverage of the mass media. The national legislation generated by these celebrated protests has significant impact upon minority citizens, particularly as they deal with such agencies of the federal government as the military, the welfare establishment, and the voting booth.

Emphasis upon nationally prominent events has also characterized the emphasis within rhetorical criticism of the civil rights movement. Perhaps critics have tended to overlook the impact of state and local government upon life conditions of minority people. In such problem areas as police relations, educational policy, zoning and housing, criminal justice, and penal problems, local government can have far more impact upon individual citizens than does federal action and regulation. Moreover, grievances about local situations have often been the irritant which brought about federal action in behalf of the constitutional rights of minority citizens.

The purpose of this study is to focus upon the local elements of a local protest action which responded to local grievances.

Known as the Reese Affair and the Freedom Patrols, the events unfolded in Seattle, Washington during the spring and summer of 1965. It is clear that the strategies and tactics of the local civil rights leadership were derived from the mass participation non-violent model developed by such organizations as the SCLC and the NAACP. It is of interest for the particular study, however, that inventive and adaptive local leaders applied the broad model to a specific grievance by inventing a specific tactic which came to be known as the Freedom Patrol.

The methodology for this study, a situational approach, is adapted to the characteristics of the materials analyzed. Using a combination of social movement theory and Burkeian analysis, it first calls for a survey of the scene wherein the local movement was described via newspaper by participants and reporters. A necessity at this stage is for a relatively thorough description because the reader would be unlikely to have prior familiarity with the material. Next follows extrinsic analysis--a process in two parts. Characteristics of the social movement are examined as they emerge in Seattle. In addition, the leader of the movement, John Adams, concributes his own analysis in the form of responses to interview questions. Third is an intrinsic analysis of the Freedom Patrol action in the particular movement, employing Burkeian tools of the pentad, pentadic ratioing, and identification of vocabulary, culminating in an estimate of how identification was achieved by the agent.

Frequently, protest rhetoric must find channels and genre other than sustained organized discourse before an immediate audience. The Reese Case and the Freedom Patrol in Seattle provides an illustration of how civil rights leaders in the mid-sixties discovered and utilized available means of communication. The Central Area Civil Rights Committee (hereafter the CACRC) identified a variety of publics which included the police, the general citizenry, the city council, and the establishment, seized upon a local incident as opportunity for creative persuasion. That committee represented the major civil rights organization affiliater in the city, and the small core of leaders worked as a unified and effective entity.

The CACRC leader, John Hurst Adams of Seattle's First African Methodist Episcopal Church, recognized that without large budgets to support persuasive campaigning, commanding the news media provided a suitable channel for communicating with the CACRC's many publics. The effectiveness of the CACRC response is evidenced by the success of the movement in achieving its goals.

The Scene

Robert L. Reese, a Negro, was shot to death by an off-duty Seattle policeman in the early hours of June 20, 1965. That shooting sparked a reaction that shook the black community, the Seattle Police Department, and the attitudes of the city toward its "men in blue."

The Seattle P.I.'s account of the Reese shooting, based on testimony of police officers, provides a basis for discussion of the

event. The two police officers involved,

> . . . were eating with their wives in the Linden [sic. Lin Yen] Cafe, when several Negroes burst through the door, yanked them from their seats and worked them over with fists, feet, and crockery.
>
> A witness told police the fight started because one of the officers allegedly used the word "nigger."
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Both officers denied they made remarks that could offend anyone.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> The fight lasted about five minutes. Mrs. Larson, whose hand was injured when she tried to protect her husband from the rain of blows, called it, "the most terrifying experience of her life." She was covered with her husband's blood after he was knocked unconscious into her lap at the beginning of the fight.
>
> Larson came to moments later and tried to help Junell who was struggling alone. Suddenly the assailants fled and the officers pursued them.
>
> . . . Larson said the men jumped into two cars. . . He identified himself as an officer and told them to stop. When they continued . . . he fired at the automobile. The bullet struck and killed Robert L. Reese, 41, a passenger.[1]

While very dramatic, the incident was not seen as unique. Black leaders had produced affidavits through the fall and winter of 1964-1965 alleging police brutality toward Central Area blacks.

On Tuesday, June 22, King County Coroner Leo M. Sowers ordered an inquest into the shooting, jurors to be chosen from the superior court jury panel for King County.[2] Thus, the inquiry would be outside the police department.

City officials and black leaders recognized potential for real trouble. Mayor Dorm Braman announced on June 22 that he had met with black leaders and that he, Municipal Judge Charles Z. Smith, a respected black, and John Spellman, of the Human Rights Commission, would conduct an investigation of "police training for dealing with minorities."

Walter Hundley of the CACRC and CORE said that the shooting would have "community repercussions."[3] The mayor was emphatic in stating that "I don't intend that any investigation that I might order should become the means for reopening demands for a permanent police review board."[4]

The CACRC stated "We join in a press release with him [Mayor Braman] in not prejudging the tragic event. There is potential danger in adhering to rumors of any kind and particularly on an issue such as this. We should all await the findings and review by the investigative body before determining our next course of action."[5]

The two-day Coroner's inquest began on June 29, 1965, at 9:00 a.m. in room 402 of the King County Courthouse in downtown Seattle. The jury issued its verdict after hearing numerous witnesses, including a Japanese couple who testified that from the booth next to the officers they had heard them use the word "nigger." It found that Robert L. Reese had died by reason "of a gunshot wound at the hands of Officer Harold J. Larson under circumstances of excusable homicide."[6] Attached to the verdict was a recommendation of the jury: "We, the coroners' jury, recommend in the public interest

that the regulation requiring officers of the Seattle Police Department to carry weapons even while off duty be modified to prohibit them from carrying weapons at any time when they are drinking or have been drinking any intoxicating liquor.[7]

Reading of the verdict was met by moans from black members of the courtroom audience.[8] One woman shouted, "This is just the beginning . . . It's gonna be a long summer."[9] Both Seattle daily newspapers editorialized the next day on the need for calm in the Central Area--both papers anticipated trouble.

On July 2 three events together bode the emergence of a significant conflict situation. First, Mayor Braman announced that, consistent with his earlier announcement, he and Judge Smith would proceed to investigate police training. The team hoped to find out if the police department was prejudiced toward minorities, and if it was, to correct the problem. He reiterated his position that no permanent police review board should be established.[10]

Second, Officer Junell and the four surviving Negroes involved in the Lin Yen fracas were charged with misdemeanors by county prosecutor Charles O. Carrol, while Larson, the officer who fired the fatal shot was not charged. Junell, with Larson, had been suspended from the force by Mayor Braman, in the absence of Chief Ramon. The Negroes were charged with third degree assault which carried a maximum fine of $1,000.00 and a year in prison. Officer Junell was charged with provoking an assault and could be fined $250.

The third major event of July 2 was a CACRC news conference announcing that a special meeting would be held on Saturday, July 10, in the Mt. Zion Baptist Church. John Adams read the press statement:

> For many years and in many ways, Negro citizens have sought some reasonable redress from and control of the unlawful physical and psychological brutality of the police force. These earnest pleas have been completely disregarded. The refusal to discipline offending officers and make clear that this kind of performance would not be tolerated has now climaxed in a senseless death. The tragedy is compounded by the events following the fatality.
>
> Now we are greatly concerned over the Alabama style of justice demonstrated right here in Seattle with the excusing of killing of a Negro at the hands of police officers.
>
> While we respect the legal procedure of the coroners' jury, in this instance we have grave doubts as to the fairness and justice of the verdict.[11]

The CACRC leaders revealed that they had met with Mayor Braman the previous day, urging him to dismiss the two officers and bring criminal charges against them. Edwin Pratt of the Urban League was temperate toward the mayor, saying that he had attempted to stay on top of the situation. While "we don't agree that he has done enough, he has tried to respond to some appeals from the local civil rights organizations.[12]

John Adams' comments foreshadowed future events. He said that "if Chief Ramon has not acted by the July 10 civil rights meeting, we will." Adams continued that "whenever a shocking event occurs, we are asked for a cooling off period. We would like some of the

people who are on our backs to cool off a bit."[13] When asked by reporters what actions Adams had in mind he responded, "we have plans."[14]

Meanwhile, Chief Ramon, returning to Seattle from an Evanston traffic conference, responded to reporters' questions, saying he would take no "premature" action and would do nothing to Larson and Junell beyond the eight-day suspensions previously issued by the mayor. Ramon said that "the present regulations [on firearms] have been part of the department's policy for 89 years and are consistent with policies of other police departments throughout the country."[15]

Faced with mounting pressure, Chief Ramon began to shift from his earlier positions, announcing on July 7, that he had increased the suspensions of Junell and Larson from eight to thirty days. The chief explained that he had " . . . examined at length the training and activities of these officers in the past performance of their duties and find their actions in this case do not come up to an acceptable level of performance.[16] Then, on July 9, Chief Ramon amended the police regulations on firearms. He said the policy had been under study before the Reese shooting. Thus, the shooting of Robert Reese in a rundown Chinatown cafe had set Seattle on edge. The official impulse to quietly sweep the matter under the rug did not work. This time the blacks did not abandon their anger. Instead, they set about to stage one of the most unique protests in the non-violent civil rights movement in the United States.

The Freedom Patrols

The July 10 civil rights meeting at Mt. Zion Baptist Church was attended by over 500 persons. While blacks predominated, a few whites were in the audience. The meeting began with warm-up speeches by representative leaders of the community. Then came announcement of action, presented by John Adams. "Our strategies will be in two ways--one is legal and the other direct."[17] The program for Seattle included the Freedom Patrols and recourse through the Federal Courts. According to Adams, the objectives of the action were five-fold:

1. That the two policemen involved in the shooting incident be put off the force, but not necessarily out of work.

2. That the Mayor, City Council, and Chief of Police make a clean-cut statement and policy against discrimination, and that no show of prejudice ever be allowed by an officer in the line of duty.

3. That the proper means be set up to enforce such a policy.

4. That an outside investigating team, without a vested interest in Seattle's image, and without a vested interest in civil rights, be brought in to investigate the Police Department.

5. That a permanent and continuous liaison be set up between the Negroes and the Police Department, but the initiative coming equally from both sides and designated to create understanding and confidence.[18]

The Freedom Patrol was to be the Seattle version of the direct action method of civil rights protest:

> "We propose to have these freedom patrols stationed near the police on the beat," John Adams said. "And, if the policemen go in somewhere to get a little drink we'll write down their badge number." "If the police use derisive language we're just going to smile and write down their names and badge numbers. If a policeman pushes you around, make sure you fall backwards so you can see his badge and name.[19]

Adams said that the second response was on the legal front, where appeals would be made to a federal or county grand jury to reopen the Reese case. "We want to close up the big gaping holes left by the coroner's inquest," he said. "We have never come away from any meeting with city officials without our hands empty and maybe with a little trickle of blood.[20]

When Adams called for volunteers to man the freedom patrols, more than 200 persons stepped forward. After the meetings, representatives of the CACRC added to Adams' announcement. "We are not a bunch of hot heads," said Charles V. Johnson of the CACRC. "We are attempting to solve problems and create a better climate between police and citizens." [21] Walt Hundley said, "Beneath the problem is the behavior involved--the derogatory remarks against minority groups."[22]

Freedom Patrols did not appear for ten days. During that interim, Chief Ramon responded July 13, saying it was obvious that the civil rights leaders were setting out purposely to make complaints against the police. Ramon said, "The police have always operated in full view of the public out on the streets so this is nothing new.[23]

Freedom Patrols in Action

The patrols began on the evening of Saturday, July 24. The initial patrols featured leaders of the movement in the streets for maximum media impact. The technique worked as they received front page coverage in the Sunday papers. The first patrol was composed

of John Adams, Charles Johnson, Edwin Pratt, June Smith, John Cornethan, Randolph Carter, Ann Holliday, the Rev. Samuel McKinney and the Rev. Lemuel Peterson, a Caucasian minister who was chairman of the Greater Seattle Council of Churches. "The patrols observed police operations in the central area throughout the evening without incident," the Seattle Times reported.[24] The article contained considerable detail, indicating that the CACRC had been careful

> to inform reporters of their intentions. "The same group will patrol again tonight. Then it is planned, committee members will be relieved by persons now being trained. Training sessions are planned for every evening in the next two weeks. It is hoped, Dr. Adams said, that civil rights groups and churches will take over the patrols on certain days and nights. The patrols will be working around the clock in a short time.[25]

The CACRC was emphatic in its assurance that the patrols were non-violent. Adams said that "we want a systematic, dignified, well conducted confrontation with the police."[26] Included with the goal of eliminating police harrassment was that of better police protection for citizens of the central area. "Neglect of duty is as important as the brutish enforcement of laws," Adams said.[27]

Centering around the East Madison and upper and lower Jackson Street areas, four central area police beats were the focus of the freedom patrols. The beats were in the middle of the ghetto, abounding in taverns, pool halls, restaurants, and small businesses. Pimps, prostitutes, pushers, blacks and whites out for a night on the town, had associated in those areas for years. Now newsmen with their TV lights and flash bulbs added a more festive touch to the weekend revelry.

The Seattle Times reported that the atmosphere was cordial and that the police officers who were followed had no complaints, "except for the two who said, laughingly, that the glare of lights carried by television camera crews nearly blinded them."[28] John Adams commented that "our quarrel is not with the individual policemen but with injustice."[29]

A firm and clear code of conduct had been prescribed for freedom patrol participants, and now the code's implementation was personified by the leaders during the first two evenings. In addition to the required training sessions at CORE headquarters, freedom patrolmen had to submit themselves to Freedom Patrol instructions and to do their duties openly and firmly. Among the instructions were:

> ". . . be dignified and neatly dressed, answer questions but do not engage in discussions, avoid antagonizing attitudes toward the police, and under no circumstances resort to physical violence. Do not respond to heckling, use no unauthorized literature or signs or badges."[30]

John Cornethan, vice president of CORE, said in patrol briefing sessions that "you have to be emotionally well equipped for this job. If you're nervous before you go, you're too nervous to go."[31]

Organization of the Freedom Patrols

In addition to the organizational resource of a training site and program, several other forms of systematic support were employed. "We'll have a lawyer standing by in case any of us are thrown in jail," Dr. Adams said, "and we already have made arrangements for bond to be posted."[32] Other symbols of systematic organization

included wearing of identification badges and the procedural requirements that all patrolers were to telephone CORE headquarters every hour.

The freedom patrol was a movement within a movement. It represented a noteworthy phase in the ongoing civil rights movement in Seattle. That movement was, in turn, a part of the national movement. But, as a single entity, the Freedom Patrol had all of the necessary ingredients of a social movement--a grievance, a goal, a following, a procedure, and a set of resources. It had an antagonist, the Seattle Police Force. Finally, it had a tactic adapted to the specifics of the situation--a unique and localized variation on the non-violent conflict pattern which had appeared in the national civil rights movement. The local variation in its novelty was capable of capturing the attention and imagination of the media, the participants, and the general public.

The role of the media cannot be overlooked in the totality of the scene for it was television, radio, and newspapers that provided the communicative channel between the CACRC and the population of Seattle. The freedom patrols enjoyed considerable media coverage during their period of initial execution. Moreover, they provided a climax to the period of foreshadowing following the Reese shooting. While the idea of blacks "tailing" white police officers may not seem very provocative or revolutionary in the 1970's, it was a daring and provocative maneuver in the 1960's.

It was probably inherent in their nature that the Freedom Patrols would lose their impact before long. While the public launching of the patrols was accompanied by much publicity and interest, and while that launching provided a platform for the rhetorical acts of leadership, the day to day execution of the patrols could not sustain attention. The CACRC leadership group, while sustaining the patrols with trained volunteers turned its attention to the other announced phase of reaction to the Reese shooting, legal redress.

The Trials - An Anti-Climax

The four blacks were first to stand trial, beginning on Monday, August 18 in Judge Manolides' Courtroom. "Provocation" is not recognized as mitigation for assault under Washington law, and Deputy Prosecutor Jack Richey made that point in his summation, arguing that the four men "took the law into their own hands."[33] Richey concluded that "there was clearly an assault here and legally there is no defense or justification . . . it is up to you to find the defendants guilty." Defense Attorney B. Gray Warner tried to mitigate the circumstances, pointing out that Junell and Larson had been drinking heavily, that the officers had joined in the fighting, that the word "nigger" had provoked the blacks, and that Officer Larson had shot Robert Reese.[34]

On August 20, all four black men were found guilty of third degree assault. They were sentenced on September 4 to ninety days in the county jail with a possible thirty days off for good behavior.

Under provisions of the county's new work-release program, the men could serve their time on weekends, and Judge Manolides noted that all four men had good work records and were supporting families.

Officer Junell fared better in court when he was found innocent of provoking an assault by Judge Manolides on August 27, 1965. The jury attached a statement to the verdict which read: "Only mutual tolerance of white man for Negro and Negro for white man can create in our community a relationship where neither need seek the protection of the law because of racial differences.[35]

Federal Actions Threatened

On September 4, 1965, the CACRC, dissatisfied with official actions, hosted a news conference to announce that "civil rights leaders will go over the heads of local authorities and attempt to get redress for the killing . . . " John Adams, speaking for the committee, continued that "We are announcing a four-point program to get relief from police abuse of Negro citizens and the recent demonstration of utter contempt for Seattle Negroes in the handling of the Reese case."[36] The four-point program included:

1. Continuation of the freedom patrols to keep watch on the policemen.
2. Setting up of a central complaint bureau on police brutality and misconduct.
3. Public hearings on complaints. The first will be held September 18 at 10:00 a.m. at the Mt. Zion Baptist Church.
4. Petitioning the Civil Rights Commission for a fair hearing of the Reese case.

"Obviously," said Adams.

> "there's no hearing for us here. The door has been slammed in our face. We're sick of the games and hanky-panky and musical chairs played in the Police Department and the exoneration of officers for offenses for which other citizens would be prosecuted to the limit of the law.[38]

In addition to Adams' extemporaneous remarks, a press release was issued which said in part: "Seattle Negroes are advised by the Police Department, the Seattle P.I. and Times, the mayor and every other white member of the white power structure that the wanton killing of Robert Reese by a drinking off-duty patrolman is now a closed incident. The Reese case is not closed. We will not be quiet.[39]

A second news conference was held October 13, 1965, simultaneously maintaining pressure on the police, and foreshadowing declining movement emphasis on the Reese case, in freedom patrols, and in protracted litigation.

Petitions bearing over 1,000 signatures and requesting a federal investigation, had been gathered at a recent rally. Adams said it was hoped by the CACRC that the federal investigation then in progress would lead to calling of a federal grand jury. "The Seattle Police Department and the Office of the Prosecuting Attorney have deliberately refused to thoroughly investigate the circumstances . . ." said Adams. "The officers involved should have been fired. They clearly violated police regulations, and, indeed, were punished by mild suspension. But those same regulations call for the dismissal of the offending officers."[40] Adams stressed the significance of recent

events, saying that "we are sitting on a tinder box here. Another incident like the Reese case, or even not as drastic, will have dire results for our entire community.[41]

Summary of Events

To summarize the narrative of the Reese case and Freedom Patrol period: the event that would, in an earlier period have been passed off as insignificant, became a major civil rights campaign for the CACRC and Seattle's black community. Beginning as citizen concern over the shooting of a black man by an off-duty policeman, the affair became a conscious campaign directed at the behavior of the entire police force. A tactic in the form of the Freedom Patrol emerged as a unique solution to the strategic need of the movement for a non-violent means of directing public attention to the police situation. The patrols died down in the fall, but the pressure they generated resulted directly or indirectly in several developments in Seattle, including:

1. Increased solidarity among black masses.

2. Increased public awareness of the concern of blacks over prejudicial attitudes and discriminatory behavior by police.

3. Increased recognition of the leadership position of the CACRC by blacks in the central area, by the city establishment, and by the Seattle populace.

4. Activation of the Seattle Human Rights Commission.

5. Discovery of a protest tactic that was unique and effective in confronting police. That tactic would be applied in several

other cities following publicity it received in black publications.

6. Action within city government to improve police relations with the black community. The mayor, Dorm Braman developed a direct interest in the problem and numerous specific reforms and innovations were implemented, short of a police review board.

7. Better communication between the mayor's office and the ghetto. The city now had a reference point within the central area--the CACRC. For several years, that organization would be consulted by the city and be regarded as its best hope in reaching reasonable settlements with the black community.

8. Better appreciation of black legal problems by such establishment organizations as the Seattle-King County Bar Association. That appreciation paved the way for the appointments of Charles Z. Smith as Superior Court Judge and Charles V. Johnson as municipal court judge.

It is not surprising that the affair ended without a formal settlement. Most objectives of the CACRC were reached in direct private negotiations with city officials. The rallying point and critical demand: firing of Junell and Larson, was not realized, but the Reese case would remain upon the memory of Seattle, a tragedy and a touchstone in race relations.

Rhetorical Analysis of the Reese Case

Reaction to the shooting of Robert Reese was played out on a symbolic plane, a drama which took place in a variety of settings:

in the courts, the streets, in press conference rooms, and council rooms. The CACRC sought to order its responses to maximize public awareness of black grievances. It created the concept of Freedom Patrols as a rhetorical vehicle to convey its message to the broad citizenry and to the opinion leaders of the city.

Extrinsic Analysis of the Case

The Rhetorical Problem: Police Brutality

A wide variety of symbolic interaction accompanied the entire chain of events, all stemming from what the CACRC identified as a single traumatic event in the life of the city. The shooting, while particularly hideous, was symbolically for blacks, "more of the same." John Adams' description of the event was consistent with that of other blacks. He thus achieved identification with himself portrayed as a movement leader through identification of a scenic situation.

As John Adams described the scene, black men throughout Seattle knew that they were at the mercy of the police--that any officer might harrass, molest, insult, or attack a black and get away with it. That was the way things had been as long as blacks could remember.

The CACRC spokesman sought every available means of communicating his description of the police situation to the public. He used dramatic terms and he used suspense and foreshadowing in his press statements for a full two weeks before announcing the freedom patrols; he organized news conferences several times to elaborate on the freedom patrols and their purpose; he led large civil rights meetings at Mt. Zion Baptist Church to announce and organize the patrols.

The Solution: Freedom Patrols

The patrols created an event which, because of their novelty and provocativeness, captured the interest of the press and the public. With that event as the focus, CACRC leaders, particularly John Adams, had ample opportunity to convey their demands to reform police operations. The city administration, the Chief of Police, the downtown businessmen--were embarrassed.

John Adams discussed some of the strategic and tactical elements of the freedom patrols in a 1973 interview conducted by the present writer. Aware that the CACRC had been concerned with police brutality prior to the Reese shooting, Adams was asked, "Did you feel you had to do something to avoid an eruption to the central area? Did you feel that this was a good opportunity to jump on the police issue?" Adams replied,

> "Many of us in the committee had felt that the police situation was pivotal for the simple reason that they were controllers of the community and, if we could not break their intimidation of the community, the community would never begin to develop itself. That's one reason. Their attitude and behavior and performance were sometimes just downright disgraceful toward black citizens. Something had to be done to sensitize that community to the fact that its police force was not any model.[42]

Thus, while the Reese shooting provided the impetus for a campaign, the police had been on the CACRC "list" for a while. During Adams youth, when his father was a Southern preacher, a small freedom patrol had been organized to protect World War II G.I.'s coming into town on liberty. Adams said that

> "The idea emerged in a discussion between the four key people you are looking at--Walt Hundley, Charley Johnson, Ed Pratt, and myself. We were talking and just trying to come up with something to deal with the problem, because at that time police activity in the black community was just shameful. This came out of it."[43]

It was noted in the interview that over 200 persons were trained for maintenance of the patrols. Then Adams was asked, "How long did the patrols last, and how intensely did they pursue their announced task?" Adams responded, "Well, we had a couple of hundred people involved, and it tailed off a couple of months afterward, primarily because we developed a different tactic because we found some of the strategic places to be. We did, then, for two or three months, just some watching of certain strategic areas rather than watching the whole force in the central area."[44]

Adams was asked if there was any channel of negotiation used other than street demonstrations. He related the general rhetorical political theory that guided the CACRC: "We used all the techniques and ways of influencing available to us because, even though we were very direct and sometimes abrasive in our protests, we never withdrew in such a way that we would not negotiate for advances with the power structure whomever they were or whomever was representing them. So, in addition to protest, we practiced politics."[45]

Finally, Adams was asked to generalize about gains and advances motivated by the Freedom Patrols. His answer: "Well, we just kept the pressure on, you know, the cop to the courts. There was an unequal administration of justice and we felt something had to be done.

Significant things began to happen. The courts became different. Some black judges began to emerge and all kinds of things started happening. We don't claim direct credit for the fact that Stokes and Smith and Johnson are judges, but we thing we began to create the kind of climate where the judicial system became representative of the whole community."

That the leaders turned their attention to other matters is natural. A climate for long-range conciliation had been fostered and the constituency of the CACRC had been enhanced and strengthened. The point had been made with the general public that no longer could police abuse black citizens without serious repercussions.

Finally, the symbolism of a viable organization was projected throughout the campaign. Americans value organizations that work smoothly, that are well developed, and that use contributor talents in relatively specialized ways. The image of the campaign was consistent with those values in that jobs were identified and assigned and participants became a "marching army." That Seattle's black citizens were capable of such organization was not lost on the general citizenry. They could be thankful that the CACRC was non-violent. But the message was implicit in the reality. Here were numerous black people in the central area, they were capable of organizing for independent action, and they were sufficiently agitated over the Reese shooting to take action. Any thinking Seattleite had reason to ponder his racial attitudes and behaviors.

Intrinsic Analysis: Freedom Patrols as Symbolic Interaction

The response of the black community to police brutality in the form of Freedom Patrols was a unique and significant adaptation of tactics to a rhetorical situation.

As numerous single instances of more formal communication emerged from the Reese situation--press releases, recorded oral statements, speeches in the form of sermons, and the like; all of which were familiar civil rights protest tactics, the striking form of communication was the patrol itself. Patrols were symbolically communicative as one form of rhetorical act that emerged from the scene.

Scenic conditions facing the CACRC, taken together, shaped its rhetorical choices to escalate to the Freedom Patrol. The courts had been tried as an avenue of redress and had been found wanting. Protest meetings had been held--their potential as attention getting devices via the media were being used up. And, within the central area, the mood was becoming ugly and threatening. An outdoor protest mishandled could erupt into violence. The scene, or situation, called forth a rhetorical solution where the act, the Freedom Patrol, modified and clarified by the agency, the CACRC, emerged as the dominant vocabulary of motives. Such a vocabulary was highly non-verbal compared to traditional rhetorical mechanisms and vocabularies. The particular vocabulary of the Freedom Patrol was unique, and thus,

an interesting manifestation of 20th century rhetorical activity.

The Reese shooting, symbolically, gathered up the cumulated frustrations of the black community over its perceived powerlessness. Here was a situation where an officer of the law could shoot a black man for what appeared to be reasons of his own, and to get off with only a mild reprimand; a situation where blacks could still be punished for raising a hand to stop insults and verbal abuses.

An organization claiming to represent the interests of central area blacks needed an effective mode of response. The CACRC, therefore, had to find an act that would dramatize through an agency its purpose; overcoming the assumption of majority whites that in the Reese case justice had been done. Thus, the problem was to execute in a dramatic way some act that would attract attention.

Review of the discourse leading up to the actual freedom patrols clearly focused upon the patrols as the crucial act. Once chosen, the vocabulary of motives employed by the agent, the CACRC was focused upon business related to organizing the patrols. This vocabulary operated to the exclusion of articulation of grievances. First, the CACRC hinted that some unspecified action was in the works. After that went on for a couple of weeks, considerable publicity led to the civil rights meeting at Mt. Zion Church. Next, the meeting proper provided a stage where the actual patrols were initially described and where over 200 persons stepped forward to volunteer their participation.

Next, two news conferences were held shortly following the Mt. Zion meeting. The general public was told of the detailed organization resources developing for realization of the act--preparations for legal counsel, for training volunteers, for scheduling and planning, and for perpetuation of the organizational structure to endure as long as necessary. Rules of behavior were described which reflected an image suitable for the patrols--rules which mandated neatness of attire, politeness, seriousness of demeanor, purposefulness, and dignity. The image stood in sharp contrast to the description of black behavior in the Reese incident fracas, serving in a secondary way to proclaim a corrective rhetorical implication.

Implementation of the act, the patrols, was scheduled for the two evenings likely to gain maximum press. Weekends are generally low in national content for newspapers and TV. In addition, papers, especially during the summer, are hungry for material for their Sunday editions. The intense media coverage of the initial patrols indicates clearly that ample advance work was executed to motivate reporters to pay weekend visits to Skid Row and ghetto sections of the city.

The primary, overriding identification sought through the patrols was identification of disharmony between the police department's own description of its behavior and attitude toward blacks and that department's actual behavior and attitude. That blacks would organize so thoroughly indicated that some motivating discrepancy must exist. Identification of the gap between claim and

performance was the mechanism through which the CACRC would hope to achieve identification with its broader aims related to police. For the CACRC hoped to achieve public support for a police review board, for administration of punishment to Officers Junell and Larson, and a federal investigation of the circumstances surrounding the Reese case.

Thus, action of a non-verbal nature provided a locus around which much verbal and non-verbal communication and persuasion took place. The CACRC was able, through the Freedom Patrols, to redefine the situation related to the Reese case, and to seize the high ground from the police. The dramatic situation generated through the patrols reversed the very role of the police. The police became the watched; the blacks the watchers. What a contrast from the rowdy and disorganized image of blacks generated by press descriptions of the original brawl. It was as if every element of the Reese situation had been reversed. Blue collar workers were replaced by black professionals, violence by non-violence, hostility changed to friendliness, and the police as "good guys" was replaced by an image of distrust--a need to be watched. The spontaneous, uncontrolled setting of the Reese shooting was replaced by a carefully controlled and planned situation. Everything about the freedom patrols stood as a rebuttal of the Reese situation.

Finally, it was CACRC blacks, not the establishment, who controlled the situation. City Hall did not know when, where, how long, or how intensely, the Freedom Patrols would persist. The shock value on the general public was unknown and the Mayor must

have been uneasy. The idea of blacks determining their own behavior and destiny was still relatively new in Seattle.

Finally, for such an operation to contain drama, it must have an audience. The audience is reached through the media--television, radio, and newspapers. The event must be high in visual activity and potential. Thus organizational skills of leaders must be applied to adapting the patrols to needs of the local media. And it is important to recognize the significant value that anticipation plays in the whole undertaking. As with a finely tuned play, the anticipation is worth as much in dramatic value as is the realized event.

The Seattle freedom patrols provided an appropriate solution to the rhetorical problem posed by the shooting of Robert Reese. The final product illustrates the utility of the CACRC's situationally based philosophy of rhetoric, applied to solution of human problems.

Notes

[1]Seattle P.I., June 23, 1965, p. 15.

[2]Seattle P.I., June 22, 1965, p. 2.

[3]Seattle Times, June 22, 1965, p. 4.

[4]Seattle P.I., June 23, 1965, p. 15.

[5]Seattle Times, June 25, 1965, p. 10.

[6]Verdict, Case #1794-65 - State of Washington, County of King, June 30, 1965.

[7]Ibid.

[8]Seattle Times, July 1, 1965, p. 9.

[9]Seattle P.I., July 3, 1965, p. 6.

[10]Seattle Times, July 2, 1965, p. 1.

[11]Seattle P.I., July 2, 1965, p. 4.

[12]Ibid.

[13]Ibid.

[14]Ibid.

[15]Seattle Times, July 6, 1965, p. 2.

[16]Seattle Times, July 7, 1965, p. A.

[17]Seattle Times, July 11, 1965, p. 1.

[18]Seattle P.I., July 11, 1965, p. 11.

[19]Ibid.

[20]Ibid.

[21]Ibid.

[22]Ibid.

[23]Seattle P.I., July 12, 1965, p. 23.

[24]Ibid.

[25]Ibid.

[26]Ibid.

[27]Ibid.

[28]Ibid.

[29]Ibid.

[30]Seattle P.I., July 25, 1965, p. 3.

[31]Ibid.

[32]Seattle Times, August 13, 1965, p. 2.

[33]Ibid.

[34]Seattle Times, August 27, 1965, p. 6.

[35]Seattle P.I., September 4, 1965, p. 4.

[36]Ibid.

[37]Ibid.

[38] Ibid.

[39] Seattle Times, October 13, 1965, p. 42.

[40] Seattle Times, January 20, 1966, p. 19.

[41] Interview with John Adams, April, 1973.

[42] Ibid.

[43] Ibid.

[44] Ibid.

[45] Ibid.